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SARAH WINNEMUCCA'S

PRACTICAL SOLUTION OF THE INDIAN  
PROBLEM.

A LETTER TO DR. LYMAN ABBOT  
OF THE "CHRISTIAN UNION."

BY  
ELIZABETH P. PEABODY.



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## SARAH WINNEMUCCA'S

PRACTICAL SOLUTION OF THE INDIAN PROBLEM.

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TO DR. LYMAN ABBOT, *Editor of the Christian Union* : —

BECAUSE you so cordially announced Sarah Winnemucca's "NEW DEPARTURE," a year or more ago, as the Christian Union's solution of the Indian problem, I send you this Report that I am now desirous to make to the public, *unofficial* and *official*, of her progress. The distinguishing characteristic of this New Departure is that, instead of being, as usual, a passive reception of civilizing influences proffered by white men who look down upon the Indian as a spiritual, moral, and intellectual inferior, it is a spontaneous movement, made by the Indian himself, *from himself*, in full consciousness of free agency, for the education that is to civilize him.

Sarah Winnemucca's idea is an inheritance from that remarkable chief of the Piutes, Captain Truckee, who in 1848, for the first time, discovered that there were white men in the world! In the first chapter of her "Life among the Piutes"<sup>1</sup> Sarah tells of his meeting with General (then Captain) Fremont in the mountains of Nevada, who accepted his proffered

<sup>1</sup> For sale by T. Y. Crowell, 13 Lafayette Place, New York.

guidance on the unaccustomed way, and with whom he and a dozen of his braves went down to California, where the wonders of civilization burst upon him, firing his imagination, before his self-respect had been wounded and his heart discouraged, as is the usual Indian experience, with an unquenchable ardor to share these glories.

He and his braves were able to do Fremont service in the affair of Mariposa and the immediately following conquest of California, for which they were decorated, and so respectfully and kindly treated by Fremont that the old chief's heart was completely won; and he clung to his "white brothers," as he pathetically called them, to the end of his life, although immediately on his return to Nevada he was told of those terrible emigrations that had rushed across it "like a roaring lion," as Sarah phrases it, striking terror into the souls of the women and even of the brave men, who could not understand the wanton and unprovoked cruelty with which these white savages shot all Indians down as soon as they were seen, as if they were wild beasts. But he persisted in calling them *exceptions* to the end of his life.

The artless autobiography of the first chapters of Sarah's book gives the key to her career as reconciling mediator for the mutual understanding of the two races. She was educated for it by her grandfather. That she has actually become this, is shown by an article from the "Daily Alta California," of July 24, which I have just received; and I beg that you will insert every word of it here:—

“ We have referred already to the school for Indian children established in Nevada by the Piute woman, Princess Sarah Winnemucca. Her efforts have seemed to us to deserve encouragement. Travellers through Nevada who have seen the squalid crowds of Indian children at the stations taking eagerly scraps of food offered them at the car windows, may think that the regeneration of those people is impossible. To change this opinion it is only necessary to consider the case of Sarah Winnemucca, who, when her childhood was long past, first had opportunities for education, and improved them so well that her attainments command the respect of all white people who know her. What education has done for her it may do for a majority of the children of that tribe in which she was born a Princess, a Chief's daughter. She is very active for her people, and loses no opportunity to urge them forward in the path to civilization. Recently she sent a message to those Indians living in Inyo County, in this State, urging them to send their children to school. A copy of this letter was sent to the School Trustees of Inyo, and we invite the attention of our readers to it. She says : —

“ ‘ BROTHERS AND SISTERS : Hearing that you are about to start a school to educate your children, I want to say a word about it. You all know me ; many of you are my aunts or cousins. We are of one race, — your blood is my blood, — so I speak to you for your good. I can speak five tongues, — three Indian tongues, English, and Spanish. I can read and write, and am a school teacher. Now, I do not say this to boast, but simply to show you what can be done. When I was a little girl there were no Indian schools ; I learned under great difficulty. Your children can learn much more than I know, and much easier ; and it is your duty to see that they go to school. There is no excuse for ignorance. Schools are

being built here and there, and you can have as many as you need; all they ask you to do is to send your children. You are not asked to give money or horses, — only to send your children to school. The teacher will do the rest. He or she will fit your little ones for the battle of life, so that they can attend to their own affairs instead of having to call in a white man. A few years ago you owned this great country; to-day the white man owns it all, and you own nothing. Do you know what did it? Education. You see the miles and miles of railroad, the locomotive, the Mint in Carson, where they make money. Education has done it all. Now, what it has done for one man it will do for another. You have brains same as the whites, your children have brains, and it will be your fault if they grow up as you have. I entreat you to take hold of this school, and give your support by sending your children, old and young, to it; and when they grow up to manhood and womanhood they will bless you.'

"It is hard to find in all the literature of pedagogics a stronger appeal to a primitive or any other people to avail themselves of the benefits of education. Exceptionally good in its language and logical in its presentation of reasons, it constitutes not only advice to her own tribe, but it is the finest of all the genuine proofs of the capacity of the Indian intellect. We cannot help feeling that such a woman deserves help, and that her work should command support far beyond the lines of her own State. If each of the tribes could furnish only one such woman, of equal culture, sincerity, and energy, their joint influence upon the future of our Indians would be greater than all the armies that can be put in the field. The Federal Government should consider her and her work. She has defended her people against the rascally treatment of its agents, but with a rare discretion has never, therefore, inflamed them against the whites. She has con-

stantly pointed to civilization as desirable above all things, and has taught them that return to their old ways is forever impossible.

“We believe that the Indian Department should found an Indian school in Nevada and put Sarah at the head of it. The cost would be small compared with the value of the experiment, and surely it would command the sympathy of all right-minded people. She has ample culture, and she knows the Indian character thoroughly, while it is easy to believe that her example will be of great value in encouraging her pupils. When Indians have a white teacher there must naturally seem a great gulf between them. The pupils must often despair of ever approximating the learning which they believe came as naturally to the white man as the color of his skin. But when an Indian teacher like Sarah can say to them, ‘I learned this, I am an Indian, and you are as good as I am; what I learned is as possible and as easy to you,’ there must be in it a superior encouragement. We do not know whether there is on this coast any organization that is charged with the interests of these humble people. We believe Mrs. John Bidwell has done something in her vicinity toward advancing them, and she may be known to the East for her good work. If there be an organization it should bring this matter to the attention of the Government, to the end that this Indian woman may have facilities equal to her energy and to her noble spirit. It won’t hurt the whites any to give their gentle and philanthropic sentiments free play in a matter that is full of interest and of genuine Christianity.”

Without stopping to tell of the circumstances of her life, inward and outward, that have brought her to the point of her present undertaking, — though to do so would give new meaning and



interest to it,—I hasten to say that a year and a half ago, when it seemed as if the conditions she craved were to be despaired of, Senator Leland Stanford, who came into relation with the Piutes in 1863 and personally knew their exceptional character, spontaneously deeded to Sarah's brother, Chief Natches, one hundred and sixty acres of land near Lovelocks; and a few of the friends of Sarah at the East, to whom she had fully communicated her idea and what she wished to do, advanced from their own private resources barely sufficient capital to enable Natches to get his land surveyed and in part fenced and planted, and Sarah to open her school for his children, and those of some other Piutes wandering in the neighborhood seeking chance jobs of work. She began instructing them in the English language, which she had grown up speaking in her equal intercourse with both races.

Our idea in giving this aid, without which the land would have been no boon, was to give Sarah the chance to begin her experiment independent of the agency at Pyramid Lake, which, like the large majority of Indian agencies, prevents civilization by insulting and repressing that creative self-respect and conscious freedom to act, from which alone any vital human improvement can spring. We wanted that there should be no pretext of favors received, for the agent, who naturally enough is her personal enemy, to interfere or meddle while she, with a few of her people, began a self-supporting, self-directed life on the ground of their inherited domestic moralities, which,

in the case of the Piutes at least, are very pure, as she had demonstrated to us in her lectures and by her own remarkable personality, thus making a healthy wild stock of natural religion on which to graft a Christian civilization worthy of the name, which might rebuke and correct that which certainly disgraces it now on our frontiers. But all that we did for her still left her with broken health and numberless hardships to contend with, which would have crushed any less heroic spirit.

She began her school in a brush arbor, teaching gospel hymns and songs of labor, that she interpreted in Piute; and as soon as the children could speak and understand some English she began to teach them to read and write it, also to draw and even to cipher, sending us through the post-office specimens of their work and of their sewing. And in February we were surprised with the following letter, which came soon after one from herself, in which she described the unexpected visit, and said that Captain Cook made a speech to the children (which she interpreted to them in Piute), telling them that when he was a boy he had not such advantages of education as they were enjoying. This letter I immediately sent to the editor of the "Boston Transcript," who published it with his own indorsement as follows:—

#### A PRINCESS'S SCHOOL.

Miss Elizabeth P. Peabody has had her heart cheered — not that it has ever faltered in that generous trust of which only noble natures are capable — with the following unex-

pected testimony to the faithfulness of the Piute "Princess" Winnemucca to the cause of uplifting her people. Other friends of the Indian have turned against her, but Miss Peabody has persevered in supporting this most remarkable woman through every kind of cruel and scandalous assault upon her character by those interested in having the poor, dispossessed remnants of the peaceful Piutes left naked to their enemies. This is surely trustworthy testimony:—

LOVELOCKS, Feb. 25, 1886.

MISS PEABODY,—A few of the principal residents of Lovelocks, having heard so frequently of the Piute school and the aspirations of the Princess, concluded, after very little cogitation, to verify in person the truth of these prodigious reports. As a few of the party were unable to attend during the week, the children were kindly retained on Saturday for our enjoyment.

The site of the school building is about two miles from the town; and so unpretentious is it in appearance that a stroller would look upon it as a quiet rural home instead of the labor field of your worthy beneficiary. When we neared the school shouts of merry laughter rang upon our ears, and little dark and sunburnt faces smiled a dim approval of our visitation. After a brief conversation with the Princess, we seated ourselves comfortably, evidently feeling that

"Come what come may,  
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day."

Speaking in her native tongue, the Princess requested the children to name all the visible objects, repeat the days of the week and months of the year, and calculate to thousands, which they did in a most exemplary manner. Then she asked them to give a manifestation of their knowledge upon the blackboard, each in turn printing his name and spelling

aloud. It is needless to say, Miss Peabody, that we were spellbound at the disclosure. Nothing but the most assiduous labor could have accomplished this work. But most amazingly did I rudely stare (and most of our party were guilty of the same sin) when these seemingly ragged and untutored beings began singing *gospel hymns* with precise melody, accurate time, and distinct pronunciation. The blending of their voices in unison was grand, and an exceedingly sweet treat. We look upon it as a marvellous progression; and so gratified were we that we concluded to send this testimonial containing the names of those present, in order that you may know of the good work the Princess is trying to consummate. Considering that only six weeks have been consumed in effecting this much [it is six weeks since the house was completed; the school out of doors had existed longer. — E. P. P.], we feel that any further assistance would be well deserved and profitably expended by Sarah. One of our party, Captain Cook by name, addressed the children upon the usefulness of knowledge and its power in the world. When the Princess had made proper interpretation of this speech, their bright eyes seemed to say in response, "We are, though still in the bud, the flowers of the coming dawn which perfume the golden mosses of the oak."

I remain very respectfully,

LOUISA MARZEN.

Signed by each —

MRS. JENNIE E. HARRINGTON,  
 MRS. H. C. EMMONS,  
 T. H. WORKMAN,  
 GEO. W. LECOMPTON,  
 EMILY E. CUTTING,  
 CAPTAIN FRANK COOK.

Sarah wrote also that she had asked these people to write and tell me of their approbation, because it was I that had given the schoolhouse. But in doing this, and also by subsequently naming her school the "Peabody Institute," which is painted on the outside, there has grown up a false impression, as if *I* were the originator and prevailing influence of the school. This is diametrically opposite to the fact; for the very point I would make most prominent is that the whole thing is an Indian idea and an Indian plan; and the reason that she feels me to be her mainstay is that I do not bother her with my suggestions, but wait to see what it is her impulse to do, because I see that she knows, as I cannot, how the Indian mind is to be approached and set at work for that self-development which is the only real education. I owe to her a conviction, which has grown upon me continually for three years, that the only vital education for the Indian as for every child is Froebel's method of keeping an equipoise of doing and thinking.

Soon after receiving the above letter I had several newspapers sent me from Nevada, Utah, and California, from which I will extract specimen paragraphs. One from a Lovelocks correspondent of the "Silver State" says:—

"The Princess Sarah is making her school for young Piutes a success. The attendance is large, and little Indians may be seen on our streets every morning with their lunches, wending their way to school, a mile and a half off. She keeps excellent order, and conducts the school as systematically as any experienced 'schoolma'am.'"



There is a very certain proof that neither Sarah nor her brother suggested this article, in the seven words we put in italics in another paragraph of it; for Piutes have never been known to handle "tomahawk or scalping-knife," — never took a scalp, though they have been scalped themselves by whites, of which Sarah told several pathetic instances in her lectures when she was here.

"Chief Natches has *put aside the tomahawk and scalping-knife*, and taken hold of the plough and grubbing-hoe. He has cleared about forty acres of the one hundred and sixty given him by Governor Stanford. He will sow thirty acres of wheat, and put the rest in barley and vegetables. He has a dozen or more Indians working with him upon a dam belonging to his white neighbors, who pay him by allowing him water for his ranch, this season."

Another says : —

"Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins has erected a schoolhouse for her people, and has about twenty-five pupils, all little Piutes. They learn rapidly; and though the school has been housed only about six weeks, some of them can read and write already. The school is free to all Piute children in this county, *provided their parents make arrangements to board them*. This is the only drawback to the school, that Princess Sallie has not means to feed the children, and she could not have built the schoolhouse had it not been for the assistance given her by philanthropic people in the East."

Another quotes from the "Daily Alta California" the first notice it made, as early as March (referred to on page 4): —

"Out in Nevada is proceeding an experiment that deserves the respectful sympathy of the world. Princess Sarah,

daughter of Winnemucca, late chief of the Piutes, has opened a school for the Indian children, and the young of her tribe are flocking to it for instruction. In this effort to reclaim her primitive people this Indian woman rises to a nobility that puts her in line with the best of the superior [?] race."

When I wrote to Sarah for an explanation of the "drawback," she said that the Piute parents who had been doing job-work for the people of Lovelocks in the winter, must go on their summer hunt for subsistence and winter stores, and take their children with them, and already some of her best scholars had gone; for which she was sorry, as she had hoped that when Senator Stanford should go home from Congress at midsummer, he would stop and see them, and be so pleased with what Natches had done with the land and what she had done in the school, that he would demand, from the fund in the Indian Office appropriated for Indian education, money enough to make her school a boarding-school during the summers. She said the poor parents had assembled in council in her schoolroom, and expressed their grief that they could not pay her themselves for their children's board; and they compared this school, where the children were so happy in learning, to the Reservation schools, where they were *whipped* and taught nothing, but on which the Government wasted millions of dollars every year.

Now I (together with other intimate friends of Sarah) was desirous that the Government should not be solicited to help, but that her own work, seen in contrast with the work of the agency, should

command its sympathetic co-operation ; and I put into the "Boston Transcript" of April 21 the following article : —

#### THE FIRST SCHOOL TAUGHT BY AN INDIAN.

*To the Editor of the Transcript :* I was much obliged to you for your sympathetic introduction to the letter from those seven people in Lovelocks who wrote me about Sarah Win-nemucca's school, whose success under such hard conditions as she is in (starving on pine nuts, without bread or meat) is such a very important fact with respect to Indian education, which hitherto has been necessarily so imperfect, because conducted by instructors who did not know any Indian language. This is the first instance on record of an Indian school taught by a full-blooded Indian who grew up with both races, speaking both languages, and inspired from her infancy with the idea of civilizing her people by making English also their vernacular, and preparing the scholars in their turn to teach English to their companions and their parents, as children can best do.

Then, after inserting the above-given slips from the Western papers, I added this paragraph : —

If I can raise \$100 a month this summer, the calamity of having this *real* school scattered may be averted. Within a week I have raised nearly a hundred for April ; and if promissory notes to be paid in May, June, July, and August, can be sent me *at once*, I can send her a telegram to *keep her scholars, for their board will be paid*. Any sums from one dollar to a hundred may be sent to me at Jamaica Plain, 4 Cheshire Street, in these promissory notes, for which I shall not demand payment unless the school goes on.

ELIZABETH P. PEABODY.

This appeal immediately brought \$400 in sums from one dollar to fifty dollars, and a promise of another \$100 for August; and I sent word to her to keep her scholars. This was a great proof of the moral impression she had made of herself in the summer of 1883, for already all the organized sympathy for the Indians in the East was pre-engaged; — as, before the Piutes were heard of, all the funds to be raised by the women's associations were pledged to their own missionary work; while General Armstrong came every year and carried off thousands of dollars for Hampton School and Carlisle, and Bishop Hare did the same for Dakota.

But I see that I am transcending the limits you prescribed for my article, and must hasten to tell of a month's visit made to Sarah, beginning July 18, by a lady who has been for twenty years engaged practically in public and private education West and East, and who became acquainted with Sarah in the summer of 1883, and then promised her, if she recovered Malheur, that she would go out and renew with her the school that Sarah and Mrs. Charles Parish had kept, under the auspices of the only good agent among seventeen that ever were sent out to the Piutes; and it may be seen, by reading the sixth chapter of "Life among the Piutes," that nothing is wanted to solve the Indian problem practically (at least among the Piutes) but good faith on the part of the Government agents in giving them the white man's chances without discounting their earnings in the agents' interest. For the last year this

lady has been the teacher of methods in a normal school in Wisconsin; and she offered to go out at her own expense, if provided with free passes, and report to me concerning the school. In quite a voluminous correspondence with me she has given a history of the *statu quo*, comprehending an account of the state of things both inside and outside of the ranch, having found that the half had not been told her of the difficulties attending such an attempt as Sarah's, arising from the general hostility of the frontiersmen to Indians, and their disposition to crush their attempts at self-subsistence, intensified by every degree of Indian success. She found Sarah personally also in circumstances of infinitely greater discomfort than she had imagined, and in addition to the chronic rheumatism and neuralgia from which she knew she had been suffering for two years, prostrated every other day with chills and fever, so that the first thing she set herself to doing was to cure her with quinine, which she effected. But this makes more striking her testimony to the character and quality of Sarah's teaching, which is directed to making the children understand and speak English and then to read and write it. She found the pupils in the Second Reader, and she said every lesson was read in English and in Piute; and in Sarah's reading to them (from the Bible for instance), there was the same use made of both languages, and the conversation upon the subject matter that accompanied it was extremely animated. Comparing the classes with those with which she was familiar in the United States schools of chil-



dren of the same age, Sarah's scholars were decidedly superior. In their writing and drawing, of which she sent me a dozen or more specimens, the superiority was marked, and made more marvellous by the fact that there was no school furniture but benches without backs, which, when they wrote, drew, or ciphered, they used as tables, sitting or kneeling on the floor, and sometimes, making the floor their table, they lay on it to write or cipher. But the children were so interested and zealous to learn that they were perfectly obedient, and when out of the specific school hours, — which were, at the time she arrived there, diminished from the four hours that had been the rule, by the pressure of the industrial work connected with the agriculture and housekeeping (for this school of Sarah's comprehends all their life), — she found the boys digging a cellar, and the girls assisting Sarah about the cooking and the cleaning, everything being scrupulously neat both in schoolroom and tent. The ages of the children ranged between six and sixteen, and the individuality of each child was described, with those points in which they severally excelled. Within its range, in short, the education was superior, instead of inferior, to the average white education in our primary schools, being upon the method of the "New Education," in which doing leads thinking, and gives definite meaning to every word used.

I wish I could induce your readers to look into the volume published by Carleton & Co., of New York, named "The Hidden Power," written by Mr. Tibbles, the white husband of the Ponca Bright

Eyes, every word of which, as he told me, is fact, except the proper names.

It is utterly impossible to begin to do justice to any such movement as Sarah Winnemucca's unless the century-long action of the Indian Ring is understood. This subtle power, which dates with the organization of the Fur-traders' companies, has come to govern this country as completely as for a time did the Slaveocracy, and still defeats everything proposed to be done; and this explains why in these last few years so little has been accomplished by Indian Rights' associations, and the enlightened plan of Mr. Dawes and others for division of lands in severalty to Indians.

## POSTSCRIPT.

HERE ends the article I prepared for the "Christian Union," but which, proving too long for a newspaper, you have advised me to print in a pamphlet; and I conclude to make it an appeal to the UNOFFICIAL people of the United States, instead of to the Government, as I first thought of doing.

For, notwithstanding the good intentions of the new administration, I see it is effectually hindered (*how*, it does not itself realize) from doing justice to the Indian, as its first act with respect to the Crow Creek tribe promised would be its policy.

I mentioned that the satisfactory testimony respecting the character of Sarah Winnemucca's school, with which I closed the above report of it, was extracted from "voluminous letters," overflowing with details of the innumerable difficulties Sarah had to contend with, of which some idea may be obtained from the following extract of a letter which my correspondent addressed at the same date to an Indianapolis newspaper:—

"Natches wanted land of his own; and for a wonder, he got it. Senator Stanford gave him one hundred and sixty acres. Where cattle range, land must be fenced. Lumber is very high, as it comes from a distance. Miss Peabody sent him \$200 to fence it. Water comes next. Nevada is a desert without irrigation. By agreeing to pay them out

of his crop, Natches furnished thirteen men (Indians and himself) one month, to work on the dam and ditches, to pay for his water, but gets no paper to show how long. Eastern people help him to a wagon, plough, spade, hoe, and axe. He already has horses, and he gets in sixty-eight acres of nice wheat. As the wheat grows and tempts the cattle, the water-power people tell him he must leave the gate open so they can get to their ditches, some of which they put on his land without permission. The white men on each side of him have gates, and keep them shut, although their land is used only for grazing. I go to town, find they have no right to say anything about it, and the gate is put up, and the old uncle who has camped by it to keep out the cows and save the wheat can do something else. The wheat gets ripe; he can hire a machine to cut it at \$1.75 per acre, cash. He has no cash; he must hire Indian women at \$5 per acre, and pay in wheat.

“The next time I go to town, I am told that the water company has decided not to let Natches have any more water, because ‘Indians are so lazy, they don’t want them around,’ and, for illustration, point to that old man who sat all day by the hole in Natches fence. I tried to explain; but it is not permitted to explain things here.

“At all the railway stations along the road, one sees Indians sitting on the shady side of the house or walking along the track, sometimes begging. I talked with one of them of the loafing and card-playing that is so common. She admitted and regretted it, and added: ‘Let me disguise you as an Indian, and go to the reservation where all these Indians have been trained. Stay a few weeks as an Indian, and learn to enjoy work as we have to do it, and see if you think our young men can see any good in it, or have any motive for doing it. You know children,—see what you think the same training would do for a white child.’”

It is plain that jealousy and opposition were excited to madness by the very success of Sarah's unexampled enterprise, which has also aroused the attention of Agent Gibson, whose intrigues form the subjects of other letters.

The week before she arrived, an official from Washington, who was an intimate friend of Gibson, had appeared, and told Sarah that unless Natches would surrender his independent possession of the land, and she the direction of her school, to the authorized agent of Pyramid Lake, no aid would be given to the boarding-school from the reserved fund for Indian Education. Sarah, however, had indignantly refused to accept any aid on such destructive conditions.

I must confess I was not surprised or very sorry for this final demonstration that the only effectual thing to be done to help the Indian *to come up from himself* (to use a happy expression of Mr. Dawes', that exactly describes what Sarah is intent upon doing), is to ABOLISH THE PRESENT AGENCY SYSTEM ALTOGETHER, as I am glad to see was proposed by Mr. Painter, at the late Mohunk Conference; for it is the most effectual instrumentality of a formidable RING, composed of the still unreformed civil service on the frontiers, and of the majority of the frontier population, who deprecate Indian civilization, and work against it with an immense mercantile interest scattered all over the Union, that fattens on the CONTRACTS FOR SUPPLIES, which is the breath of life to this well-named "Hidden Power."

It has been suggested that the preliminary step to



such abolition must be to make public the history of this Ring, whose action from its beginning has been for the general removal of the tribes from their several original localities; revealing the secret of the Florida War, and other operations, — among its most subtle ones being its apparently friendly co-operation and hypocritical flatteries of the various organizations for educating and christianizing Indians. Such a history would explain their motives in making Sarah Winnemucca “a suspect” in the eyes of just those who should have received in generous faith this champion of her people’s right and opportunity *freely to select* the best things in civilization, — the principal one being, as she intuitively saw and everybody is at length convinced, the individual *versus* communal tenure of land, — while they are also free to retain whatever of the inherited tribal customs she also sees intuitively are necessary to preserve their social life heart-whole, though open to inspiration for individual self-development.

In her “Life among the Piutes,” which every one should make it a matter of conscience to read before making up his mind upon the character and aims of this most remarkable woman, it will be seen how naturally and inevitably she incurred the enmity of the several agents to whom has been traced directly every slander, especially that of Rinehart.

The sixth chapter of that book gives an appreciative account of the only agent among seventeen that had been sent out to the Piutes since they were known to the whites, who was not a calamity to

them. This man, Samuel Parish by name, by his disinterestedness, honesty, and the simple humanity of his arrangements, demonstrated that there need be no difficulty with the Indians if they are treated fairly, and that with the same chances the Piutes at least can become as prosperous and rich as the white settlers, instead of being the burden that all Indians have seemed to be during the "Century of Dishonor," so faithfully represented by "H. H." in the book of that name, and later in the wonderful story of "Ramona," which is gradually doing for the Indian what "Uncle Tom's Cabin" did for the negro. But it would take a volume even larger than Mr. Tibbles' book upon the "Hidden Power" to give in detail even the history of this persecution of Sarah, which has been traced out in all its subtleties by many of her friends, who consist, I may truly say, of all the hundreds of audiences whom her artless addresses took captive, between her arrival at Boston in the spring of 1883 and her departure to the West from Baltimore in the August of 1884. I have never seen or heard of one person of all those who themselves heard her speak in public (after the first lecture that she gave in Boston),<sup>1</sup> who was in the slightest degree affected by accusations that answered themselves in

<sup>1</sup> In that first lecture she offended, by her story of the conduct of the Methodist agent Wilbur, a Methodist lady, who endeavored to bribe her to say no more about him, by promising her hospitality and other assistance. But Sarah was obliged to tell her she had nothing else to tell but just such actions of agents as his. This started an opposition against herself at once, that succeeded in making the Woman's Association turn a cold shoulder to her.

every person's mind who had been under the spell of the simple statement of facts that she made with names and dates, and defied the world to prove one of them false. I myself heard her speak in public in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania as many as thirty times, in which she never repeated or contradicted herself once, though it was obvious that except in the choice of some particular subject to be made her theme, she took no previous thought as to what she should say, but trusted that the right words would be given her by the "Spirit Father," whose special messenger she believed herself to be, and impressed her audiences to believe that she was.

She got thousands of signatures to her petitions, made friends for herself, and interested the most excellent members of Congress to present her petitions, and the Senate did, on July 6, 1884, pass a bill which by implication abolished the agency of Pyramid Lake, — for it proposed to give the reservation to Winnemucca's and Leggins' bands in severalty of lands. And so I content myself with what will give to any person of common sense and candid heart the above hints by which they may estimate the intrinsic worth, or rather worthlessness, of the slanderous rumors which Gibson has lately succeeded in impressing upon the minds of a few persons who ought to be her coadjutors, and whom she could aid in her turn in carrying out their own good intentions to the Indians, if it were not for the unhappy misconception of her which prevented their making acquaintance

with herself personally. "There is nothing so sad in the records of experience as that the children of light should misunderstand each other;" nor is anything so disastrous as a mistake made by the *good-intentioned*, because their impressions are not questioned but swallowed incontinently, without investigation. Could I have had a personal interview with those persons, I feel sure they never would have given publicity to their mistake, for which I hold only Gibson morally responsible; but this interview they did not seek, having jumped to the conclusion that I was passively deluded. They did not know that I had been a student of Indian history for more than seventy years, having, as early as seven years old, taken my first impression from my own mother's enthusiasm for another "Indian princess" whom a great-uncle of mine, one of the generals in our Revolutionary War, married in Northern Michigan, where he went to settle after the war, and whose half-breed descendants, by the name of Hunt, are valuable citizens of that State. It was the first impression of the noble domestic education this Indian princess gave her children, followed up by hearing my father read to my mother, before I was ten years old, the Moravian Heckerwelder's "History of the North American Indians," which goes into the details of the tribal mode of training the children to habits of reverence for elders, truthfulness with each other, and a majestic self-respect, that gave me a key to the characteristic Indian virtues, and enabled me to read "Hubbard's Indian Wars," with open eyes to see that the white

race was more responsible than the Indians for the cruelties which transpired on both sides. Ever after I was an omnivorous reader of everything I could find about Indians, whether from ethnologists or travellers or residents, among them,—like Catlin, for instance; so that H. H.'s "Century of Dishonor" told me nothing that I did not know before. Besides this, I learned from William B. Ogden<sup>1</sup> the history of the origin and action of the Indian Ring from its beginning with the fur-traders; and studied the secret history of the Florida war, with officers of the army engaged in it, who revealed to me its persistence in the interests of the civil service under Governor Duval. All this, and acquaintance with the half-breed Chippewa missionary Tanner, who thirty years ago made in Boston precisely the same explanatory criticism on the vicious principle of all the missionary work for Indians that Sarah Winnemucca does,<sup>2</sup> prepared me to appreciate and understand the

<sup>1</sup> William B. Ogden — sometimes called "King of the West," the founder of its capital, Chicago — was brought up near the Indians of Central New York, and did not abandon, until the last part of his life, a plan he formed early, to go into Congress and agitate to gather Indians into States to be represented in Congress, to which he thought they would give a needed predominating moral element. This opinion was formed from long and intimate acquaintance with individual Indians, East and West, and sympathized with by those who had it in their power to send him to Congress. He thought to give ten years to the agitation of the subject; but the pecuniary responsibilities for others, whose property he had advised them to invest in Chicago, and which was imperilled by the panics of 1837 and 1857, obliged him to put it off till death mocked his great purpose. A great purpose must be executed in the first fervor of its conception, or it never will be.

<sup>2</sup> This "vicious principle" is admirably set forth in Frederic



first lecture I heard from her, which she addressed "exclusively to women," in which she unfolded the domestic education given by the grandmothers of the Piute tribe to the youth of both sexes, with respect to their relations with each other both before and after marriage, — a lecture which never failed to excite the moral enthusiasm of every woman that heard it, and seal their confidence in her own purity of character and purpose.

The faith that she then inspired in me has grown by everything else I have known her to say and do in a more than three years' intimacy in which my life has been bound up in hers; yet my faith and confidence in her do not rest exclusively on her own eloquent *ipse dixit* and practical consistency with it, far less on my own subjective impressions, which I am fully aware can be no evidence to other people, but on collateral evidence that has been continually pouring in upon me, that I am ready to give *viva voce* to other people, but much of which cannot, with propriety, be put into public print, as it involves a story of private trials of her own that are sacred to those who know them in all their particulars. This collateral evidence consisted, in addition to what is published in the Appendix to "Life among the Piutes" (see the "Letter of Roger Sherman Day, unsolicited"), of the testimony of persons unknown to Denison Maurice's "Religions of the World," and their relation to Christianity, which ought to be a manual for missionaries to the Indians especially, they are so apt to forget, with the exception perhaps of Quaker missionaries in the spirit of William Penn, that God reveals himself to every soul of man.

Sarah Winnemucca, who unexpectedly arose in her audiences to confirm what she said and declare it was not exaggerated, — such persons as the Rev. Edwin Brown of the First Church in Providence, Professor Brewer of New Haven, Father Hughes of St. Jerome Convent in New York, and a French priest for whom he spoke, and who he said was in Yakima when she was, all of whom gave personal indorsement to her statements; also correspondents of mine in Nevada and California, one of whom furnished the following slips from the California newspapers of 1879, confirming her statements about Rinehart and Scott.

“In addition to what Princess Sarah Winnemucca said during her lecture the other evening about one Rinehart (the Indian agent at the Malheur Reservation), to the effect that not an Indian remains on the reservation at that place, additional statements come by way of Walla Walla. These reports say that there has not been a single Indian at that agency for over a year, and yet supplies are being constantly sent thither by the Government. The agent (Rinehart) himself has tried, and sent his emissaries all over the country, even unto Nevada, to bribe the Piutes to return. But in vain. Those poor Indians have had a taste of his brutality, and they want no more of it. So it seems that Sarah knew what she was talking about, and knew the facts. She said that this pet of the Indian Ring had promised pay to the Indians for working; and when they applied for their wages, his course toward them was such that they declined further peonage of that kind.

“Then he assumed the character of the bully, and with pistol in hand attempted to force them to work for him. Now, allowing the one concession that the Piutes are men,

it is perfectly natural that they should have left him and the reservation. Had he been a man of honesty and honor, he would have informed the Government of the exact condition of things, and thus have prevented the Government from still forwarding supplies for that agency. Not an Indian is within two hundred miles of the agency, and not one can be bribed to return. Yet the Government still sends the supplies. What becomes of them? Perhaps Rinehart could tell; and perhaps Commissioner Hoyt could tell—if he would. Under such circumstances, no wonder the question is asked why Rinehart is still kept in office under salary, for performing duties that do not exist. It is suggested that the reservation lands be sold for the benefit of the Indians. The question is asked, says the despatch, for what Indians? There are none within two hundred miles.”

Here is another newspaper slip of this date, headed “A Model Representative of the Indian Bureau:”

“Two or three weeks since, a fellow named J. W. Scott, who pretends to be acting for the Interior Department, arrived here from Oregon. His threats created considerable alarm among the Indians, who congregated here from all parts of the country to hear what he had to say. Natches and Winnemucca say that at the time of the outbreak at the Malheur Reservation, a year ago last summer, this man Scott, who they state had a beef contract at the reservation, had a talk with the Indians at Crowley’s ranch. They told him that if he would state their grievances on paper and send the document to Washington, they would return to the reservation. The chiefs dictated and Natches interpreted what he should write. When they finished, not having very much confidence in his integrity, they took the paper from him and gave it to G. B. Crowley to read. In this way they

ascertained that he had not written what they dictated, and instead of stating the fact that they were being starved at the reservation and were driven to desperation by the treatment they received, he painted the Indians as demons and the agent as an angel. This infuriated the savages, and Natches and Winnemucca could hardly restrain the reservation Indians from scalping Scott right then and there. Knowing that he had played the Indians false at that time, Natches and Winnemucca were afraid to trust him at the council held here upon his arrival from Malheur a short time ago, and they asked a few white men — among them the writer — to be present. What occurred at the council was truthfully reported in these columns at the time. Scott, it appears, does not like the truth; so he reported to Natches yesterday that the 'Silver State' stated a few days ago that he (Natches) and Jerry Long, the interpreter, were the most notorious liars in the country. What object the fellow could have in telling such a lie to the Indians, the writer cannot surmise, unless it was for the purpose of making them distrustful of those who tell the truth about the Malheur Agency. An acquaintance of many years with many of the Piutes of Humboldt County warrants the writer in saying that so far as his experience extends, they are generally truthful and reliable; while respectable white men who knew Scott in Plumas County, California, before he went to Malheur, say the records of the courts in that county will show that decent men testified that they would not believe him under oath. Surely the Interior Department ought to send a man with a better reputation as its representative to hold councils with the Indians, and keep Mr. Scott at Malheur to take the census of the Indians and make affidavit to the quantity of beef and blankets distributed at a reservation where there has not been an Indian since a year ago last June."

To these slips I might add most curious letters that I have received from both Democrats and Republicans of Virginia City and Reno, who, supposing me to be sister of the millionaire banker, wrote to induce me to serve their political interests with money and influence, — some praising and some abusing Sarah, and both enlightening me.

Hoping that I shall be pardoned for the inevitable egotism of making this special plea for my reliability as a witness in this case, I conclude to add to the report of the claims of her school what has transpired even since I began writing this Postscript.

With her last letter acknowledging the last money subscribed for her boarding-school in August, came a notice that the literary exercises of the school were suspended for a month, on account of her need of rest, and in order that the children might assist in harvesting the splendid crop, some of which, as it had been agreed upon beforehand, was to pay the eleven men who had labored with Natches in the winter to buy water from the water company for the year's irrigation, and some was to pay the fifteen laborers, men and women, who were to help in the reaping, while the rest of the wheat, sold at the current market price of \$30 per ton, would provide for the ensuing year's maintenance, besides affording food and seed corn for another year's planting.

I must confess I was rather surprised at her letter's not containing a pæan of joy on this impending happy consummation, but only a painfully earnest expression of anxiety that *I* should now rest from my labors for



her, and be content if she only went on in future with the day school. But I ascribed her subdued tone to the exhaustion produced by the long strain she had been under of body and mind. It was, however, explained by her next letter, when she enclosed to me a letter she had received from a mistaken friend of mine telling her that Miss Peabody had sent her all the money that had been provided for her own old age, and had been working for her to get the \$100 a month, harder than she (Sarah) had ever worked in her life. I need not say that this was accompanied with a passionate entreaty that I would never send her another cent, and suspend all further care for her work. Of course I replied, *instantly*, that this letter was false in every point; that the provision for my old age was untouched, and that the work I was doing for her was the greatest pleasure I had ever enjoyed in my life. But before she could get my reply (for it takes six days for a letter to go from Boston to Lovelocks), another short missive came, saying that I must not write to her again till she should send word of her new whereabouts; for, "on account of our ill luck," Natches and herself were going away to earn some money,—she to get work in some kitchen for at least her board. But not a word of explanation of the "ill luck," which I could not divine.

I have therefore kept back this paper from the press till I should hear again. And another letter has at last come, after a fortnight of dreadful silence, acknowledging my letters that she had just found, on

her return to Lovelocks after a fortnight's service in the kitchen of a Mrs. Mary Wash, of Rye Beach, where she had earned her board, and had less than a dollar in money ; and in this letter she explains the "ill luck." Some of her inimical white neighbors had told her people, who had agreed to take pay for their work from the wheat, that Miss Peabody was sending her out \$100 a month *for them*, and thus put them up to demanding their pay in money at once ! "If we could have borrowed \$200 for two months," she says, "we could have paid them in money, and then sold the rest of the crop for \$30 a ton. But it was the game to force us to sell the crop to the store-keepers for \$17 a ton, which (thanks to the Spirit Father for so much) paid all our debts, but left nothing over ; and I could not feed on love, so could not renew the school ; and I was perfectly discouraged and worn out." Add to this, her dear niece Delia had just died, who had been in a consumption ever since the death of the elder son of Natches, which took place when they were all so sick of pneumonia at Winnemucca just before Mr. Stanford gave them the ranch. She rejoices that "she is safe in heaven ;" she hopes the "Spirit Father may soon let me die." When she has fixed up her winter clothes she says she shall go and seek more work for her board ; and adds in closing, "So, darling, do not talk any more on my behalf, but let my name die out and be forgotten ; only, don't you forget me, but write to me sometimes, and I will write to you while I live." Of course I have replied to this wail, that while I do not

wonder at her despair for the moment, I by no means accept it as the finale of our great endeavor, — that it is a natural but temporary reaction of her nerves, and I see that she is still her whole noble self in this energetic action for personal independence, which I shall make known at once to all her friends, sure that it will challenge them to help her through another year until another harvest. Meantime I believe that the entire change of work will prove a recreative rest, and her people will plainly see by it that it is not true that she had been living irrespective of them on the \$100 a month, and that her enthusiastic scholars will not fail to bring their parents back to their confidence and gratitude to her.<sup>1</sup> I tell her that I have found

<sup>1</sup> It may seem strange that her own people could be so influenced by the settlers even for a time. It shows their demoralization. It was one of Sarah's acutest trials to find, when she went out to Nevada, in August, 1884, how the last seven years of homelessness depriving her people of all opportunity for family councils and the hereditary domestic discipline, had told on their morals. She found them divided into small squads scratching for mere bread under captains elected for their *smartness in getting along*, instead of their goodness, as when the fatherly chief appointed them; and that they had partially lost their old confidence in her as their faithful "Mother," though she could not blame them for it, as she said she had been made the mouthpiece of so many lying promises. The same want of confidence had transpired temporarily in 1880, when the Indian Office failed to send the canvas for the hundred tents to Lovelocks that it spontaneously promised her father when they were in Washington in 1879; and the Secretary of the Interior also failed to follow up the written order he gave her to show her people and Agent Wilbur of Yakima. But that had proved a transient spasm of doubt, and she had come East on her mission in 1883, at their entreaty. She had begun to feel, however, since commencing her school, that it would prove a rallying-point of union, and with the exception of the inter-

at the bookbinder's two hundred copies of her book, which I shall at once begin to sell for her again, offering to send one, postpaid, to whoever sends me \$1.00, and thus make the nest egg of a new fund to enable her to renew her grand enterprise of making a Normal School (for that is what she was doing) of Indian teachers of English, for all the tribes whose languages she knows, and who will, in their turn, give their scholars, together with the civilizing English language, the industrial education that they have at the same time received, while helping in the housekeeping and on the ranch.

And with this implied appeal to the multitudes of individuals in the United States who, I am certain, are earnestly desirous to do something for our Indian brothers, but do not know exactly what to do, I send forth this pamphlet in the faith that has brought millions of dollars, unsolicited except in prayer, to George Muller's Orphanage in Bristol, old England, and created the Consumptives' Home and the asylum for incurable cancer patients in New England.

ELIZABETH P. PEABODY.

JAMAICA PLAIN, MASS.

preter and the other virtual slaves of the agent on the Reservation, that they would be brought into unity with her, notwithstanding the unceasing intrigues of Gibson against her, and which were undoubtedly excited by the fact that her school was attracting even the Piutes on the Reservation, who wanted to send to her their children.



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N. MANCHESTER,  
INDIANA



